**SPARTA'S POLITICS**

During the classical period Sparta's politics were different from Athens' politics. Athens used [tyranny](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/politics/tyrants/hubert.htm) in their government and also used a form of [democracy](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/politics/jamie/jamie.htm). Sparta did not like the way tyranny worked so they produced a different form of government. The Spartans had a constitution or what they called a [rhetra](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/politics/sparta/defini.htm), which came from the [Great Rhetra](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/politics/sparta/defini.htm) . The Spartans formed a very complex government mixing democracy and [oligarchy](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/politics/sparta/defini.htm), and this form of government was a model for other [poleis](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/climate/geography/yourpage2.htm). The government was made up of three parts, the kingship which was unusual in that there were two kings, the Gerousia (the council of elders), the Ephorate, and the Assembly.

The kingship in Sparta was shared by two kings. These kings inherited their position. They shared equal powers and held responsibilities for life. The kings were so important that they had 100 men as bodyguards! Some of their responsibilities included being active commanders of the [army](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/war/army/seanh.htm), which gives them power to go to war with any country they choose. There were reforms instituted, that restricted some powers of the kings. They held no judicial power.

The council of elders, called the Gerousia, were elected by the Assembly and held office for life. The Gerousia consisted of 30 men including the two kings. They had to be over sixty years old, except the two kings. This is why they called it the council of elders: 28 of them had to be over sixty years old. Also, to be elected, you had to [be a man](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/dailylife/women/main.htm) and come from a [noble family](http://classes/ryan.htm). The Gerousia's responsibilities included acting as the judicial power in criminal cases, and preparing measures written by the Assembly, but they could overturn any of these measures if they thought that they were not good.

The Ephorate was the biggest constitutional change which occurred after the first [Messenian war](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/war/perwar1/helot.htm). The Ephorate was five men. At first the kings chose these men but then they changed into having these men elected annually. They changed it because their basic role was to keep the kings on the right track, to make sure that they stood by their [oaths](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/politics/ajgreece/perjury.htm), and this was to keep the kings from gaining too much power. And if the kings chose these men then the kings and Ephorate could help each other in getting great amounts of power, so they decided having the kings pick the Ephorate would not be a good idea.

The Assembly was made up of male Spartan citizens over the age of thirty. To gain citizenship a man had to pass training courses, and have a certain amount of [education](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/dailylife/education/philip3.htm). To get this education and attempt the training courses, the Gerousia decided at the birth of the infant if he was to be raised or not. If he was not to be raised he would be [exposed.](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/dailylife/exposure.htm) After the age of seven the boy is to live in "herds"; this system was called **agoge**. The agoge was set up to weaken [family ties](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/dailylife/parents/parentchil.htm) and to strengthen identity. All adults were responsible for the actions of all children; not only their children, but all Spartan children. When a child starts the agoge they are divided by age into groups and lived with older boys. These older boys supervised their actions. The agoge taught the boys how to [read and write](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/arts/literature/greeklit/dehaven.htm), but it put more attention to [physical training](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/sport/sport.htm), and [music](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/arts/music/music.htm).

When the boys were twelve the agoge was set up more like a [military](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/war/army/seanh.htm). If they passed the agoge, then they can be voted into a **mess**, but if they are not voted into a mess then they could not be a citizen. A mess is a group of fifteen men of all ages who [eat](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/dailylife/food/myfoodpage.htm) and fight together in [wars](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/war/war.htm), and they do this throughout their lives. They lived together until age thirty. When they turned thirty they were allowed to [set up their own households](http://www.historyforkids.org/greekciv/dailylife/marriage/marriage.htm). This is when they could hold a public office, but they would still have their main meals with the mess. Also men were in the military until the age of sixty. This is when they could be elected into the Gerousia, and they still ate with the mess and helped in training and teaching the younger men and the boys. The Assembly's responsibilities was to elect officials such as the Gerousia, and the Ephorate.

## ANCIENT GREEK EDUCATION

### Spartan Education

In Sparta, boys who were seven years old entered a complex system of collective education organized by the state. 'He passed up from one class to another, under the direction of masters and gymnastic instructors; he had to submit to regular training, to tests that were often painful, and to a rigorous discipline tending to develop physical resistance and moral strength, in order to turn the young man into a soldier. This education continued until the age of thirty: even [marriage](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/1/women.html) did not exempt the young Spartiate from communal life with his comrades.'

Spartan boys left their homes and entered the public educational system whose purpose was to produce a well-drilled [military](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/1/seanh.htm) machine composed of soldiers who were 'obedient to the word of command, capable of enduring hardships and victories in battle'. Each boy was assigned to a herd, or agela, where he lived communally with other boys. Under this system literacy was not a high priority, boys being only taught 'what was enough to get by with'.

At the age of eleven, the next level of education for the boys began. According to Plutarch: 'They no longer had a tunic, received one cloak a year, had hardened skin, and took very few baths and used practically no ointments, except on a few prescribed days of the year. They slept together according to platoon and herd on pallet beds made of rushes which they plucked with their bare hands from the River Eurotas -- no knives were allowed. In winter they added lycophon or thistledown to their beds, since this was thought to provide warmth.'

Spartan [girls](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/1/women.html) also received formal education. Although it is not known whether they underwent a course of training similar to what the boys went through, the evidence is sufficient to indicate that an attempt was made to keep some similarities between the two sexes.

### ATHENS

### In Athens the popular viewpoint of the time was that the State and its government were set up to benefit the individual citizen. The training of boys, both physical and mental, should be for [citizenship](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/4/changes.html) and for living, not just for [warfare](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/1/seanh.htm). Such education involved the cultivation of the [mind](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/1/philo.html) even more than the body, and had as its goals the attainment of character, taste, and, above all, sophrosyne, or patience, moderation, and good behavior in word, thought, and daily actions.

In Athens, education was largely a private matter. There were, of course, exceptions. For example, certain large gymnasiums were built and maintained for public use.

Not much is known about Greek education other than the subjects taught. We do know that only boys were generally educated, and that the sons of wealthy Athenians began school earlier and stayed longer than the sons of not-quite-so-wealthy parents. These latter boys usually left school around the age of fourteen.

Little children were taught at home by their parents or by a [slave](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/1/kirsten.html), called a paedagogus. At the age of six or seven the boys were sent to primary school which was usually within the neighborhood. Elementary school teachers were always men, never [women](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/1/women.html). Because of the low pay, and the Athenian aversion to taking a job, these men were themselves little educated and had little or no social standing. The money these teachers made came from the tuition fees the child's parents sent monthly. The costs of tuition and the topic of study were the choice of the teacher.

In school, the boys sat on plain benches while their teacher sat in an armchair, called a cathedra, and dictated, or read to the boys, their lessons from a book. At this time, books were very expensive. Therefore, the boys did not own copies of the books they were studying. Instead, while the teacher was reading out loud, the students would write down on tablets of wax what he was saying. Later they would memorize what they had written. In this way, entire books were memorized by Athenian students!

Interestingly enough, Greeks never read silently to themselves--always out loud. Proper enunciation of sound and clearness of words were essential and voice training was constant. Classes were taught and information was learned almost entirely from the spoken word. This is why the Greeks had a love of [drama](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/2/ruben.html), recitations, public recitals, and contests. [Paintings](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/2/dirksen.htm) the Athenians put on their [vases](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/2/glatt.htm) show us pictures of the school rooms. They had writing tablets, rulers, baskets full of manuscripts, and, for [music](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/2/bettis.htm), lyres and flutes. Playing the lyre, an instrument resembling a small hand-held harp, was considered so important, that if a boy couldn't play the lyre well enough, it was thought to be a sign of bad breeding.

In the better and larger schools reading, writing, and [mathematics](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/1/it.html) would be taught by a special teacher, called the grammatistes, lessons in music and poetry were given by teachers called the kitharistes, and physical training was directed by the trainer, or paidotribes."

Education in ancient Greece was far different from education today. The Athenian boy in school had a study program far easier than boys (and girls) have today. The Athenian boy could concentrate only on the Greek language and literature because no other languages were taught. Mathematics was basic and simple. There was little scientific knowledge in the fifth and fourth centuries (499 -300) B.C. The readings were mainly the works of Homer, Hesiod, Theognis and the lyric poets and probably, towards the end of the fifth century (499-400) B.C. the tragic plays of various authors. Especially emphasized were the poems of [Homer](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/4/homer.htm). These poems were the very backbone of the school course.

Primary education for Athenian boys lasted usually from the ages of six to fourteen. Secondary education, for boys from the wealthier families, was from the ages of fourteen to eighteen. Then, finally, the boys entered a military training camp for two years, until the age of twenty, when they were called ephebes. Gradually this military training was decreased to only one year, and school attendance, once mandatory, later became, after the [Macedonian conquest](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/1/ezra.html), voluntary. Toward the end of the second century [B.C.](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/3/bc.html) (199-100), [foreigners](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/1/others.html) were freely admitted to the college.

**Women in Greece**

The Study of   
Women & Gender in the Ancient World

Joy Donahue

Dress and appearance

I would like to tell you a little about the women who lived in Ancient Greece and their daily lives. The women of that time did not have the freedoms that women have today. We must remember that unless a woman had artistic or literary talents that were able to win her fortune and fame she was excluded from [politics](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/1/subpol.htm) and intellectual life.

Women's situation was improving with time and the reforms of the sixth century. Some cities, including [Athens](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/3/athens.html), even gave women the right to own [land](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/1/ben.html). Many girls who were orphans without brothers or fathers and with no social position were protected by the right to own land.

The women of this time kept small homes with not a lot of style to them. What we see in the works of [vasepainters](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/2/dirksen.htm) and [poets](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/4/poets.htm) from that time is many lively banquet scenes with female musicians and dancers. The lawful wife would not attend these festive gatherings

Women's [dress](http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/Portland%20State%20University%20Greek%20Civilization%20Home%20Page%20v2/DOCS/3/jcrew.htm) was very beautiful and elaborate. They wore long tunics of light wool or muslin. The tunics were very colorful and usually worn along with a shawl. Their hairstyles were very complex and I'm sure took a great deal of time to do. Long hair with many curls was the popular style.

Spartan Women Liberated

People: Pomeroy, Sarah B

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Abstract (Document Summary)

The centruy's turn has been a time of retrospectives: what was the most important event, who was the most influential thinker? Arts & Ideas decided to take a look ahead at what some of today's researchers are working on. From the most raked-over field, like the history of the ancient world, to the latest medical technology, scholars are coming up with fresh insights. Some ideas may turn into breakthroughs, and others may turn out to be dead-ends, but the journey is rarely boring. Here is a handful of works in progress.

With scholars poring over the same texts for centuries, ancient history would appear to be a field in which it is difficult to plow new ground. But Sarah B. Pomeroy, distinguished professor of classics at Hunter College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, says there is much to be learned about the women of Sparta, the ancient city-state in southern Greece that defeated Athens in the Peloponnesian War.

Full Text (652 words)

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''It's very difficult in my field to find a subject that nobody has taken seriously,'' Ms. Pomeroy said. ''This subject has been around for 2,500 years but has turned out to be totally fresh.''

Sparta, which existed from 800 B.C. until A.D. 200, was renowned in the ancient world as a stoic, martial city-state that practiced eugenics. It was the society that inspired the modern English word ''laconic'' (after Laconia, the region surrounding Sparta), not to mention the adjective ''spartan.'' Spartan men were raised to be soldiers from an early age. Indeed, to build and maintain esprit de corps in the ranks, they were not allowed to live apart from their military units until age 30, even if they were married.

Spartan women are often portrayed as having been as grim as the men. But Ms. Pomeroy, whose previous books include ''Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity,'' said that impression is wrong.

''The conventional wisdom was that they were the most oppressed women in the ancient world because they were simply baby-making machines,'' she said. ''But there is much more to it than that.''

Spartan women were in many ways among the most liberated of the ancient Greek world, she added. Sparta was one of the few Greek states where women received formal instruction in poetry, music, dancing and physical education. Spartan women drank wine and were famous for their beauty, Ms. Pomeroy said. Helen of Troy came from Sparta.

No women in ancient Greece had formal political rights, but Spartan women, unlike their counterparts in other Greek city-states, were allowed to own property. A four-horse chariot team owned by a Spartan woman was victorious at the Olympics in 396 B.C. and again in 392 B.C. And the two wealthiest people in Sparta during the Hellenistic period (beginning in 323 B.C.) were women.

Sparta has always been a challenge to ancient historians because information is relatively scarce. Unlike the Athenians, the Spartans built few public monuments and wrote little about themselves. The city had a fearsome reputation that did not invite visitors.

It did not fall to a foreign invader until the Thebans conquered it in 370 B.C.

Most of what is known about Sparta comes from modern archaeological evidence and the writings of Xenophon, an Athenian who was exiled to the city-state around 400 B.C., and Plutarch, who lived from A.D. 46 to A.D. 120. But Sparta cast a spell on many writers, including Plato, who used aspects of Spartan society as a model for his utopian Republic. ''Every ancient source has its bias,'' said Ms. Pomeroy, who recently received a Guggenheim fellowship and said she expected to finish writing a book about her findings in another year or so. ''It's O.K. as long as you know what the bias is.''

Athena presides over a vote. Spartan women didn't vote but enjoyed some perogatives